The McGill Daily

March 15, 1999
Volume 88 Issue 59
Grade A pickled ham since 1911

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New SSMU Executive Chosen, MSF Passes

Tischler, Van Chau, Baraniak, McPhee, Gross and Wyndowe make up next year's executive

by Jason Chow

After a false fire alarm, student politicians and wannabes alike were finally informed of the unofficial results at 4:00 AM Friday morning.

Next year's executive will be made up of Andrew Tischler at the Presidential helm, Wojtek Baraniak for the position of VP Community and Government Affairs, Xavier Van Chau will oversee the VP University Affairs portfolio, and Sam Gross will be the new VP Clubs and Services. Kevin McPhee was acclaimed to the VP Operations position last week. They will take office starting May 1.

Tischler was elated with his victory, attributing his success to him being a political outsider. Of the four presidential candidates, Tischler had the least SSMU experience.

"I've been told that a lot of people like that I'm somebody new," he said. "I'm bringing new experiences.... I'm very grateful to help students for next year."

Baraniak said that the toll of campaigning was difficult.

"I'm really happy," said Baraniak who won by a landslide 997 votes over second-place Ali Noormohamed.

(continued on page 4)

Unofficial Election Results (as of Friday, March 12)

President
Tamana Kochar - 648
Melissa Pallett - 524
Andrew Tischler - 881
Jaime Stein - 620
SPOILED - 307

Referendum: McGill Student Fund
Yes 1669
No 1219
SPOILED 112

VP Clubs and Services
Sam Gross - 1509
John Ki - 959
SPOILED - 517

VP Communications and Events (Recount Requested)
Jo Morrow - 1178
Matt Wyndowe - 1215
SPOILED - 592

VP University Affairs
Jawad Qureshi - 1072
Xavier Van Chau - 1288
SPOILED - 627

VP Community and Government
Wojtek Baraniak - 1450
Ali Noormohamed - 453
Jeff Roberts - 574
SPOILED - 507

Board of Governors
Cyrus Gérard Boelman - 1010
Duncan Reid - 1492
SPOILED - 419

Arts Senator
Sarah Clarke - 591
Jeff Feiner - 663
Fred Sagel - 335
SPOILED 220

Management Senator (Recount Requested)
Lily Chatwal - 134
Arin Jonathan Silber - 140
SPOILED - 48

Science Senator
Uduak Idiong - 79
Karen Pelley - 294
Samantha Fienberg - 128
Ambereen F. Hussain - 132
SPOILED

Mega-movie culture stamps out Cinema du Parc. See story, page 6.

Judicial Court to Decide MSF Legality

by Dasha Merkusheva

Another legal battle has once again made the headlines. But this time, it's a McGill law student who is challenging the system.

Although the McGill Student Fund passed by a referendum vote last Thursday, controversy still lingers over the legality of both the fund and the referendum question.

The dissatisfied young lawyer-in-training is Francois Tanguay-Renaud, president of the first-year law students association. He filed his concerns about the validity of the referendum question to the McGill Judicial Board.

According to Mark Bisel of the Judicial Board, Tanguay-Renaud's claim will be made public in a week, after which there will be some time for complaints or disagreements to be raised. After next week, a date for hearings will be set.

The history of the fund is also well known, and is no less controversial. Many students groups have voiced their dissatisfaction with the proposed Fund, including Graduate Students Association, actually not affected by the fee, and bombardments of angry student's letters to campus media.

Tanguay-Renaud first contacted the CRO, Drew Cormack, and expressed his concern about the referendum question contradicting the SSMU constitution. From Tanguay-Renaud's words, Cormack first agreed with that and promised that the question will be disqualified. However, a week later, Cormack contacted him and reversed his decision.

"[Cormack] said 'I changed my mind and the question will not be disqualified'," said Tanguay-Renaud.

Cormack, on the other hand, recalled the events differently, and emphasized that Tanguay-Renaud's main concern was "would an average student understand [the question]."

"I denied his request.... Personally, I acknowledge his concerns, but also think that for the average student the question was comprehensible," said Cormack.

Cormack is also prepared to defend his actions at the Judicial board, if questioned by it.

Tanguay-Renaud's submitted the claim to the Judicial Board on March 5. In his petition to the Judicial Board, he stated that "the question brought up at the referendum appeared to be unconstitutional because it contained 3 issues in one question."

The petition also complains that the referendum question of the McGill Students Fund is both violating several sections of the SSMU Constitution and by its unclear wording makes it possible for the fees collected to become permanent.

There are several arguments in the Petition which contribute to the above claim and underlie the fact

(continued on page 9)

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Michael Hechter, *"Towards a Sociological Rational Choice Theory"*
Session IV, Saturday March 20th, 2:30-4:30:
Panel Discussion: Michael Hechter, with Ian Shapiro, James Booth, Ian Jarvie and Mario Bunge

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Concordia University

March 22 7:30 PM • The Holocaust in Comparative Perspective •
Dr. Robert Melson
Purdue University

March 22 9:00 PM • The Armenian Genocide: patterns of destruction, patterns of denial •
Dr. Roger Smith
College of William & Mary

March 23 5:00 PM • Genocide: What have we learned? What must we do? •
Dr. Irwin Cotler
McGill University

March 23 6:15 PM • Genocide by Starvation: historical lessons of the Holodomor •
Dr. Roman Serbyn
U.Q.A.M.

March 23 7:30 PM • The Conspiracy of Silence: completing genocide by its negation•
Mr. François Bugingo
CBC (Radio-Canada)

March 23 9:00 PM • Panel Discussion •

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1999

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TIME: 1:30 - 4:30
PLACE: **McGill University**, Shatner Building, Room 107-108
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Letters to the Editor

One who lives in a glass house, should not throw stones.

I was recently talking with the current PGSS VP-External regarding the SSMU referendum whowas soliciting undergraduate students to vote NO. I am not writing this letter to analyze whether the referendum is right or wrong, but to comment on the actions of the PGSS VP-External. He mentioned that he "did not mind spending $800 to propagate his view (Vote NO) in his media tool (The Daily)." I wonder who is misusing a student fees?

How is it democratic to monopolize on a decision that was made by only him and his council?

Do we as graduate students have the right to know how and where our money is being spent?

Should PGSS-Council consult with their constituents on these important issues or only on voting them in on their election day?

Salah Abu Bakr Abdul Hameed
Sedimentologist - McGill University

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THE MCGILL DAILY

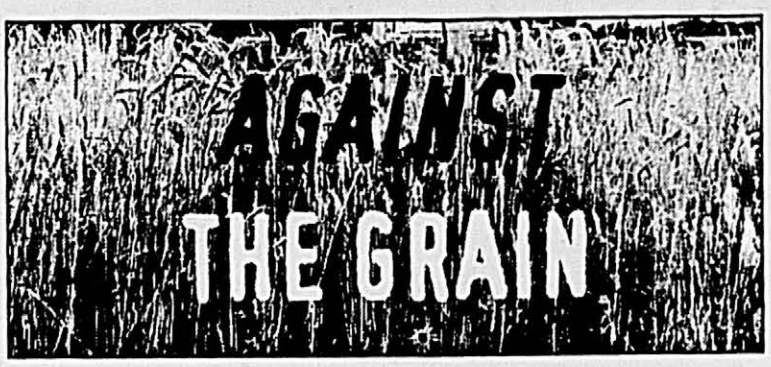
Editorial Board Elections

are taking place Thursday, March 25 at 5:30 pm in the Daily office, Shatner B-03.

ALL POSITIONS ARE OPEN

You must be a Daily staff member and be nominated by two members of the current editorial board to run. To vote, you must be a Daily staff member.

If you wish to find out if you are eligible to run under the Daily election by-laws, or if you have any other questions, just drop by the office or call 398-6784.



Dehumanizing the Homeless

BY JEFF WEBBER

My girlfriend and I stepped off the plane in London, England on the first Monday of Reading Break, and got on the tube heading downtown. The first sign bombarding all tube-riding civilians getting off at the Piccadilly Circus station is NO BEGGING. NO BUSKING. (And on a slightly more humorous level, in felt-pen at the bottom of the sign, some rent-a-cop had added that it was also illegal to move this sign).

Next there were signs demanding everyone coming off the tube to stay on the right side of the escalators unless passing. Everyone dutifully obeyed. Only a few unruly, unbathed, barbarous homeless people dared to ignore the ubiquitous indications that they were not invited to this party called British society. The sort of people that just might expose the stinking underbelly of Tony Blair's economy, if they're not shut out of all areas where "real" citizens might tread.

Unfortunately for Blair, there's getting to be too damn many of them to sweep into the gutters, safely out of sight and effectively out of mind.

Really, the inspiration for this week's column generated from a rather basic, rather peculiar source, namely my bladder. After a few days of wandering around London with a limited budget, it became increasingly evident that there were very few public washrooms available without the implicit or explicit attachment of paying for a meal in a restaurant, or a clearly expressed "intent to buy" if shopping in a mall. You would literally walk around the streets for upwards of four hours without finding a free washroom. In the infamous department store, Harrod's, they charge you 1 pound, the equivalent of roughly $2.50 Canadian to use their facilities. There is actually someone at the door paid to enforce this policy.

As a tourist, it meant little more than a few hours of discomfort over a week. But as a homeless person in London, it is yet another indicator that your existence is not recognized by society at large. That even if your existence is recognized, it's not legitimate, and you certainly don't deserve the same basic rights as those who can afford to buy their lunches, buy their clothes, and maintain personal hygiene.

This problem isn't unique to the UK in the so called "developed" world. In fact, my experience in California in the summer of 1997 illustrated the propensity for this sort of dehumanizing throughout the developed world. I walked with two friends through the surreal financial district of San Francisco, where we encountered no free washrooms, despite the fact that the streets were lined with fast-food catering to the busy days of CEOs. It wasn't just that you couldn't buy a nice car without a suit, you weren't even worthy of using their toilets.

And this in San Francisco, with one of the largest per capita homelessness crises in all the U.S., where you seem to step over a homeless person (almost surely an Afro-American), every fifteen steps in many areas of the city. Perhaps the epitome of our collective inability to view the homeless as human became apparent to me during my visit to San Diego, during the same summer. My two friends and I ran into a homeless man wheeling around in an old office chair, with no shoes. He had a large stain on his pants from wetting himself. He was a Vietnam veteran, now relegated to the margins of American society.

Canada, too, the much revered country of the welfare state, is losing its legitimate claim to this title. Vancouver's mayor took action against panhandlers who were strolling too far out of the impoverished downtown eastside and making their presence known on Robson Street, a lavish district of designer clothing shops and expensive cafés. Not only were the entrepreneurs of Robson street upset with these mongrels using their washrooms, they were upset with them being within their field of vision. In a letter to the editor appearing in The Globe And Mail last year I pointed out that Robson street is precisely where the homeless should protest, where they are made visible to the elite sectors roving Robson.

In Montréal, I've no personal experience with a lack of public washrooms. This stems from the fact that I have an apartment, and the only time I'd use a public washroom is while attending McGill, or when out for coffee, which I must purchase. Arriving back from London, having pondered this dehumanizing subject, the situation for our innumerable squeegee punks and vast homeless population became even more clear to me. On St. Laurent Blvd., for instance, homeless people who ask for change are quickly removed from cafés. Croissant Royal allows squeegee punks access to their washrooms, but only after they've bought goods. And clearly Croissant Royal is more progressive then their anachronistic, inhumane neighbour, Second Cup. From conversations with people who frequent the Second Cup on St. Laurent, I've learned, not surprisingly, that any homeless people, or "homeless-looking" people are quickly and agressively dismissed from the establishment. Always better to establish that these people don't belong, that these people aren't human, that given various arbitrary social circumnstances any one of us couldn't be one of "them."

The problem of public washrooms is only one lucid indication of the dehumanizing of the homeless. Most obviously, they deserve homes. For the interim, they can be treated like humans.

APEC Student Leader Speaks Out

Activist who took part in APEC protest explains his group's motives

BY KIM DE SIMONE

Though his name is not well known, Garth Mullins is one of a group of people who have received more coverage from the Canadian press - mainstream, alternative, and student- than most other issues of the past year.

Garth Mullins is one of the protesters who was pepper sprayed during the APEC fiasco.

At a lecture on Thursday, about fifteen people listened to a discussion regarding the APEC demonstrators and Democracy Street, the group that is representing them. Mullins - along with a partner who was unable to attend the lecture at McGill - is conducting a tour of Ontario and Quebec. Their schedule takes them to most universities, informing students of the events of the APEC affair in November 1997. Their presentation also covers the larger problems that they believe are inherent within both the RCMP and the Liberal government.

The goals of Democracy Street are far reaching; their group's aim is not simply the short-term goal of judicial success in the APEC inquiry; they profess larger and more radical goals, such as an end to global capitalism.

"The APEC protest was just one moment in the struggle that has been going on for a long time," Mullins told the small group, "The whole APEC vision is one of corporate globalization."

Neither Mullins nor Democracy Street had much faith in the Public Complaint's Commission (PCC). The Commission was originally formed as an independent body with a mandate to reveal the facts of any situation involving governmental mismanagement or corruption. Mullins argued, however, that the goal of the Public Complaint's Commission is to legitimize the police to the public.

Critics of the protesters' actions in the inquiry and their demand for legal funding by the federal government argue that the protesters are not on trial. Their jobs and careers, unlike the police officers involved, are not in jeopardy. They would claim that the commission simply wants to get to the bottom of what really happened.

One of the short-term goals of Democracy Street and of the protesters is to be able to distribute their own subpoenas to the hearing.

"We want the right to subpoena witnesses as they have subpoenaed us," he stated.

They would, in particular, like to question Prime Minister Chrétien for the hearing. Although they are theoretically able to call their own witnesses, however, the government has been blocking all attempts since the hearing began.

In response to the protesters' frustration over the difficulties have faced in dealing with the federal government, they have launched a civil action lawsuit. Their suit targets the federal government, the Prime Minister and several municipalities in Vancouver. Democracy Street's goal, is to use the commission as sort of an expose of the corrupt activities of the RCMP. and the Prime Minister's Office, in addition to venue in which to seek justice.

The Democracy Street website is another avenue by which the protesters are seeking to publicize their causes. The site includes papers by various members addressing their views on capitalism, the decline of the welfare state, and globalization. They also have memos and e-mails obtained through the Freedom of Information Act implementing high-ranking politicians including the Prime Minister. Their list of supporters contains the Canadian Federation of Students as well as communist and socialist parties.

Mullins, a graduate of the London School of Economics and Political Science, has posted the thesis he finished in 1996, entitled "International Capitalism and the Welfare State." In it, he explores the trend of many western countries who are slashing welfare budgets and privatizing more and more industries and services. He uses Canada and Britain as his main examples of this movement to free capital and explains his controversial view on why globalization is not an unstoppable force.

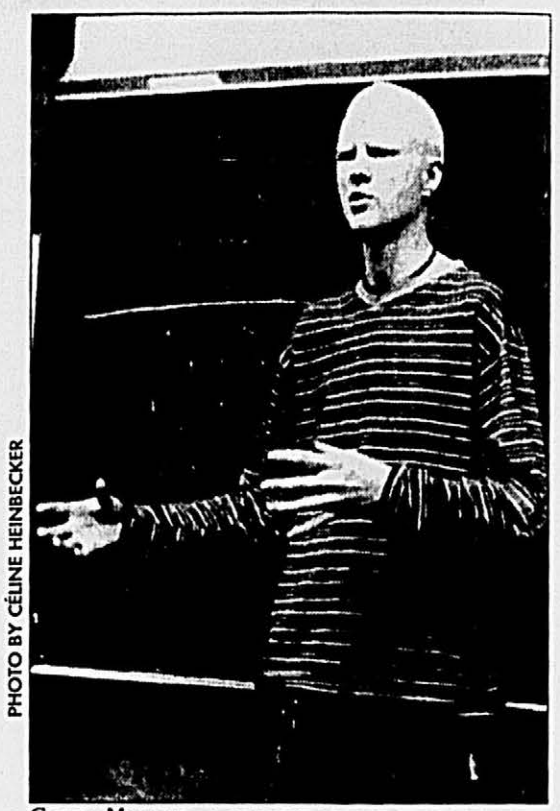


PHOTO BY CÉLINE HEINBECKER

GARTH MULLINS, A STUDENT LEADER INVOLVED WITH THE RECENT APEC CONTROVERSY, SPEAKS AT MCGILL LAST THURSDAY.

The media has been an important component in the APEC inquiry. Much of the media interest in the story came from the CBC's with the firing of Terry Milewski directly because of the APEC inquiry. But Mullins was clear.

"Whether to decide to engage in the media is a tactical decision, not a political one," he said, adding that "you can't let the media set your agenda."

Additional information about Democracy Street can be found at their website at http://democracy-street.tao.ca.

MSF approved, SSMU positions decided by voters

(continued from front page)

"I've worked so hard It's been [the] three hardest weeks of my life."

Baraniak saw his experience and what he called "realistic goals" as key to his campaign.

"I really played the experience card," he said. "I hit many issues, but set achievable goals."

He saw that next year's team would work smoothly, comparing it to the current SSMU executive.

"This year's executive is the best we've seen in years," said Baraniak. "I think we can do the same. I'm really excited to work with Andrew Tischler. I'm a strong believer in professional development."

Van Chau echoed similar hopes towards the executive's team chemistry.

"I think we have the makings of a very cohesive executive," he said. "I have a lot of good hopes."

Tischler saw as part of his mandate a continuation of many of the projects undertaken by the current Council. The move into the new student services building, the hiring of a project manager for the new building, the implementation of the McGill Student Fund, and the new constitution would be high on his priority list, he said.

Tamana Kochar, who came in second to Tischler in the presidential race, was let down by the results. She plans to run again for the 2000-2001 season, however

"I am disappointed. I was hoping to do the job next year," said Kochar.

She attributed her support to her experience; Kochar has served three years on the SSMU council.

"I think students who voted for me thought I was the most experienced," she said. "I think it's a good team and I wish them all the best."

MSF passes by over 400 votes

The controversial McGill Student Fund was overwhelmingly approved by a referendum vote during last week's election period.

Baraniak, who was much involved in the planning process of the MSF said that the students voted to improve their school.

"If it would have failed, libraries would have suffered a loss of $600 000. Shatner is falling apart," he said.

"This is how you take a stand," he added. "We can't just watch the school crumble."

Tischler also interpreted the outcome of the referendum as a student initiative to upgrade the university's facilities.

"There's a definite desire on the part of students to get the university to be better," he said. "Students wanted to help each other."

Kochar, who is the current Clubs and Services Representative to SSMU council, said she was happy it was approved. However, she was skeptical of the outcome of the legal challenge of the referendum at the Judicial Board by law student Francois Tanguay-Renaud.

"I'm not so sure about the outcome at the [Judicial] Board," she said. "But we need the money."

Van Chau believed that the MSF would send a message to the administration, showing the wants and needs of students.

"If students will create things, the administration will give a response," he said. "They'll know what students think is important."

He admitted that this was a costly communication measure to the administration, but said that with the onslaught of government cutbacks, "education is costly."

The Phrasing of the MSF Referendum Question

Some student voters voiced complaints concerning the wording of the MSF referendum question. One U1 Computer Science and Math student noted, "It was horrible. Not only was the question poorly phrased but it misrepresented the issue. The issue was construed in a way that clouded the goals of the fund. The actual issue was an increase in student fees, a matter which should be given serious thought... this is important enough for students that they should be getting the whole story, and what was written on the paper was, as I said, unclear."

He continued, "It had sound bites about the different increases in funding which would be put in place, without giving any information about how they would be implemented. It wasn't clear how the bursary would work. If it would actually work as an effective redistribution of wealth. Though it mentioned opt - out it didn't mention how easy it would be, or how students would go about opting out."

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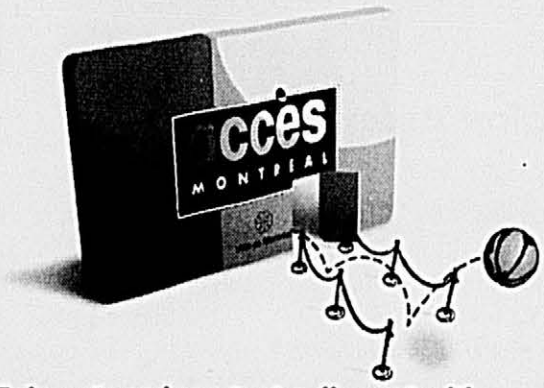

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Wed., Mar. 17, 1:00-2:00 p.m.	Wed., Mar. 24, 1:00-2:00 p.m.
Thurs., Mar. 18, 1:30-2:30 p.m.	Thurs., Mar. 25, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

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Enoch Padolsky – Dept. of English, Carleton University

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Richard Janda – Prof. of Law, McGill University

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Operations Curbed at the Parc

BY JON BRICKER

It seems less than fitting that the closest thing Montréal will have to a tribute to Stanley Kubrick are empty shelves at Blockbuster where *Dr. Strangelove* and *The Shining* are supposed to be. Had Kubrick decided to hang up his canvas folding chair just one week earlier, the Cinema du Parc's four hundred plus passholders and avid attendees could no doubt have looked forward to a Kubrick movie marathon.

Instead, the director's own very final space odyssey, coupled with the closing of three of Montréal's very last repertory theatre screens, means cinemaphiles will have to mourn in the privacy of their own home, deprived of the joy of late-night late-runs, oily popcorn, and over-iced Cokes.

In what turned out to be my final trip to the Cinema du Parc, I was recently treated to a midnight showing of *The Exorcist*. And call it life imitating art, but now I can't help feeling like pea soup vomit, spit out onto the Parc's doorstep, and figuring somewhere into the equation, an exorcisor-landlord must be dead at the bottom of a fire escape. Hmm... Poor parallel, and I won't take it any further, except to say that I'm afraid the rumours are true. The Cinema du Parc (and Stanley Kubrick) are no longer. And although few Parcheads are blaming Crown Life Insurance for the director's death, none of them were too pleased with the landlord's decision to boot the owners of one of Montreal's two repertory movie houses.

"We had met with them a day before to discuss a new lease. They said they would get back to us in the next week and the next morning our cleaners called us up and said they couldn't get in because the locks had been changed," said a still dismayed theatre owner Thierry Martin of his eviction from Les Galeries du Parc.

A Unique Alternative

And while Parc's shutdown is indicative of a quickly dying breed - independent screen houses - Martin said with the exploding mega-multiplex-movie culture, there has perhaps never been a greater need for a subversive voice: "I see it as a trend towards the worldwide fossilization of some industries," said Martin. "But we're great at what we do. It's an important alternative to the mainstream."

Tim Smy, a Theatre Manager and Programmer for the Toronto-based Festival Cinemas, sees the rep house as a unique phenomenon, and paints the struggles being felt by rep house owners as threatening consumer culture with subjection to the bigger-is-better mentality that thrives in a faceless marketplace. "It's a real shame," Smy said. "The role of the rep house is to provide a unique alternative that is friendlier, more personal - a neighbourhood theatre, not a McDonald's culture."

Last year, the twenty-year old Festival expanded its Toronto operation to eight rep houses, many of them revived and refurbished spaces long abandoned after commercial theatre companies decided to uproot insufficiently profitable single-screen operations.

But while rep houses like Festival's may represent a unique alternative, inability to turn profits has already forced Festival to downsize its operation to six theatres.

Martin also sees the problem hitting repertory cinema as a call to corporate landlords like Crown Life to become a little more sensitive to the cultural value of rep houses.

"What we are is a small repertory cinema with one location only ... we have a limited amount of revenue and the competition is enormous. But that doesn't mean put us out of business. It's an invitation to the landlord to become connected with the real world."

And Parc's absence in the heart of McGill's student ghetto is already being felt. Adrian King-Edwards, who owns The Word second hand bookstore on Milton, has already seen firsthand just how much the Parc meant to the community. Many Word regulars and sidewalk passers-by learned of the theatre's closing by an article about the shutdown that King-Edwards posted in his storefront window.

"It was extraordinary, the number of people who stopped," he said of the many who have expressed to him their disappointment over the closing. He saw the ghetto as a market for alternative film and cheap admission. He added, "This seems like a really good area for that kind of thing."

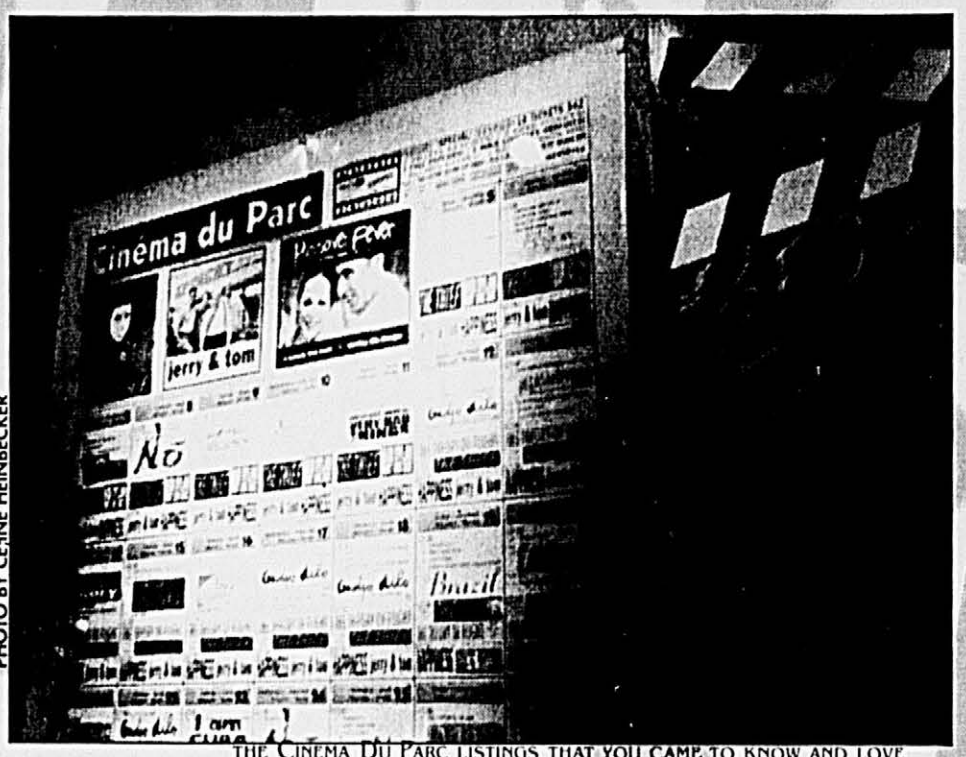


PHOTO BY CÉLINE HEINBECKER

THE CINEMA DU PARC LISTINGS THAT YOU CAME TO KNOW AND LOVE

A Shared Struggle

Cinema du Parc first made a home in the ghetto in 1995 after Famous Players left the three-screen house in the underground Galeries. Crown Life approached Martin, then operator of the Cinema de Paris on Ste. Catherine. After courting the Paris owners for nine months, Crown Life convinced Cinema du Parc to move in. Within a few months, the Parc location had taken enough business away from the Paris that the operators decided to shut down the senior operation.

Since 1995, the Parc had catered to cinemaphiles craving late-run hits, cult classics, independent, and art films and made its mark with a $6.75 General Admission and student discounts. The Parc had even introduced a forty-two dollar pass that admitted regulars to ten plus two shows, at an average price of $3.75 per show. Meanwhile, Famous Players and Cineplex Odeon patrons were treated to scrapped student rates and General Admission climbing to upwards of $9.00 in the new mega-theatre complexes.

But while Martin estimates that they had over 400 passholders, he saw first hand just how difficult, if not impossible, it can be to operate a rep house in the black. "We knew there would be a catastrophe coming if we didn't reorganize our financial situation," he said of money concerns that had grown in the months leading up to the closing.

"We were in the middle of trying to renegotiate. There had always been an agreement where they were tolerant of our inability to pay the rent according to the lease," Martin said. Needless to say, he was nonplused to find out on February 26 that Crown Life had decided to change the locks.

But the Regina-based Crown Life said it had already done all it could to keep the rep house open and.

"We have property bills to pay to the Montreal community," explained Crown Life's Assistant Vice-President of Real Estate, Les Miller.

"We had worked with them for over a year and a half, being patient," said Miller. "Under the current operation, we didn't feel comfortable and rent obligations were not being met. There had been a substantial default. We had made our concessions."

But Crown Life has yet to choose a new tenant for the vacant space and Martin cannot help but wonder why the company would prefer a huge dormant space over a tenant paying at least some rent on the space.

"It's not exactly the Eaton Centre. The place is full of empty stores. It's pretty insulting," Martin said. "They'd rather have nothing there? They'd rather have an empty hole?" he asked. Martin added that his efforts to inform theatre goers of the closing on the theatre's parc.com website were met with two separate threats from the landlord's lawyers.

While Miller admitted he doesn't foresee the Parc reopening, he was quick to reassure that Parc's regulars can expect a new rep house to fill the space in the near future.

"We do want to have a cinema operating out of there. There's a demand for that kind of niche," he admitted, calling repertory cinema "a vital part of the Montreal community."

Miller said Crown Life is already considering a number of rep house operating teams to fill the space. He also remained optimistic that he will be able to quell the passholders disappointment with his own rep house in a new location. .

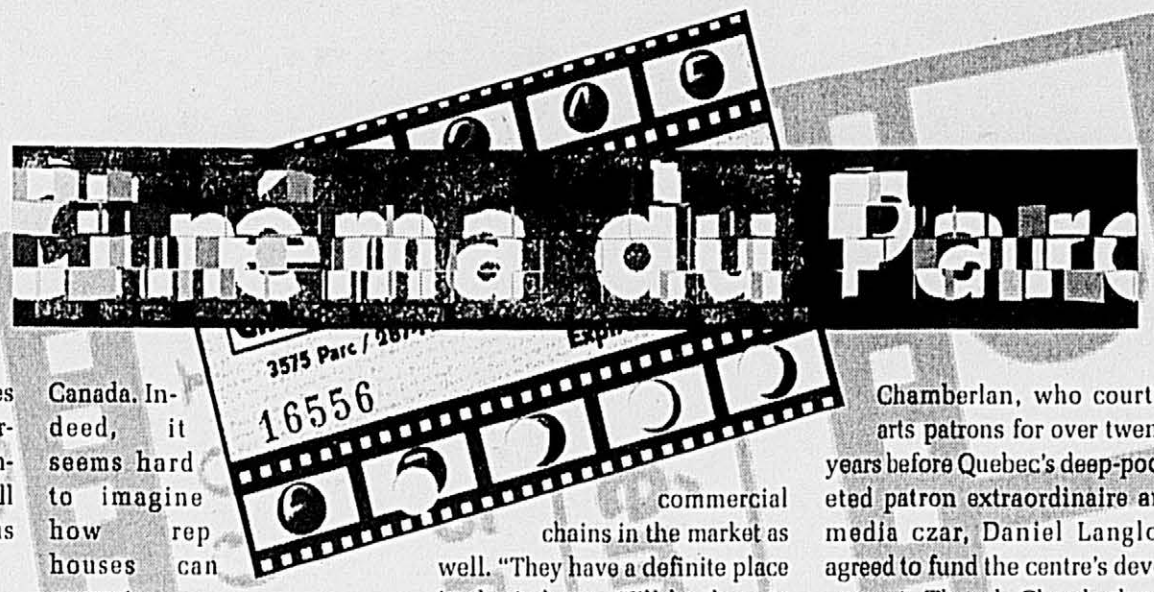
"We were absolutely broke. We were not in a position to refund the membership card. But we are hoping to reopen and honour the passes," he said, adding that he has already been approached by a number of parties interested in leasing him rep house space.

Crown Life meanwhile, among the largest five per cent of life insurance companies in North America, had assets totaling $6 billion at the end of 1997, before Canada Life bought out its life insurance arm (though not its property interests) last year. Canada Life now has total assets nearing $50 billion and small business owners in the McGill ghetto - like Martin and King-Edwards - are feeling more than a little lost in the shuffle.

"I think if an insurance company like Crown Life needs to pick on a tiny repertory cinema in a second rate shopping mall, there's a serious problem," laughs Martin.

"This is the corporate world," concurred King-Edwards who says he has a big problem with out-of-town corporate landlords, like Crown Life, holding a stake in cultural mini-meccas like Cinema du Parc. "If it were owned locally, this wouldn't have happened."

Though himself a Parc-goer, King-Edwards says his decision to make public light of the his neighbour's plight stems from his em-



As Montreal loses its last repertory screens, many are wondering just what lies in store for alternative cinema

pathy with the role of rep houses in the face of the often overwhelming commercial theatre industry. "It's just like your small second-hand bookstore versus your Chapters," he said.

Floating Cineplexes

And with current trends in the commercial theatre industry, insurance companies and landlords hardly pose the only threat to the future of Canada's rep houses. Martin can read off a role of about a half-dozen Montreal rep houses that were around when he started out in the biz as a Cinema V programmer. The Rialto, the New Yorker, the Seville, the Laurier. But asked what's left of that collection of downtown rep houses, Martin said, "Oh, they all closed down. In commercial repertory, there's nothing left."

And Martin and Smy have plenty to say to anyone left wondering what's up in the theatre industry if these rep houses seem to be dropping right off the map while Famous Players can announce its plans to open a twelve screen multiplex and 450 seat IMAX Theatre in the old Simpson's store on St. Catherine in the heart of commercial Montreal.

"With the huge expansion of Famous Players and Cineplex Odeon, they'll be taking a lot of repertory business away," Smy said. "They're putting up these huge, state of the art multiplexes. It's hard to compete with that. People want digital sound and THX."

Cineplex Odeon planned to spend over a hundred million dollars on 300 new screens in Canada in 1997 and 1998, though they reported losses of millions more; Famous Players is growing just as quickly. Recent years have also marked Odeon's buyout by the U.S.-based Loews, Famous Players being sold to distribution giant Viacom, and American cinema chain AMC's entrance into Canada. Indeed, it seems hard to imagine how rep houses can compete.

But Smy fears what this stepped-up competition might mean for Parc's role as what he terms "a unique alternative" to the commercial theatre behemoths. "We offer nostalgia," he said of the reminiscent charm of the old commercial theatres that many rep houses have come to occupy, coupled with their willingness to screen older films.

"There wouldn't be independent films if there weren't repertory cinemas," Smy said, noting another niche for the likes of Festival and Cinema du Parc. The larger commercial theatres, according to Smy, are afraid to show some of these independent and lesser-known films.

"They'd rather play [Robert DeNiro's latest] *Analyze This* in five theatres in a multiplex than [lesser-known, Oscar-nominated foreign film] *Central Station* in one."

And Martin was no less keen on distinguishing a special place in the theatre market for rep houses. "The other cinemas are saving money by putting twenty-five screens into one place. That certainly makes sense for them, but I don't think we should decide to do the same thing. I mean, we thought about adding bumper cars to our operation, but ultimately voted against it," he joked.

"We were a commercial theatre, but we didn't do everything for everybody," he said, alluding to the distinction of rep houses in the industry. "We perform another function. If you want to eat popcorn, have a soft drink, and watch Bladerunner at midnight, [Cinema du Parc] was the place to do it."

But Martin is quick to point out a cultural significance for commercial chains in the market as well. "They have a definite place in the industry. "I'll be there to see the next Stanley Kubrick movie," he said.

He even went as far as to say that the growth of the commercial chains is vital to rep operations like his own. "When they moved out of the single-screen houses, repertory cinema owners moved in. Now, they're moving out of malls and the repertory cinema owners are moving in again. We cling to their leftovers. One day, they'll probably have floating cineplexes and we'll move into the ones they're building now," he said.

The next generation of rep houses?

Besides the Famous Players opening slated for later this summer, the multimillion dollar multimedia centre at 3536 St. Laurent in downtown Montreal provides another interesting clue as to what's in store for repertory cinema. The centre boasts a three-screen cinema as its heart.

Amazingly though, the centre is far from just another one in the storming onslaught of commercial chain "cineplexes on steroids" that are changing the face of the industry. Behind the enterprise is none other than Montreal's oldest rep house veteran and owner.

The brainchild of Claude Chamberlan, who has owned and programmed at the Cinema Parallele for its entire 32 year presence on St. Laurent, the centre will mark an end to the Parallele, Canada's oldest rep house and the last in Montreal, after Parc's closure. It won't mark an end to Chamberlan's efforts to offer alternative cinema to the masses though, he's happy to say.

"It's the dream of every film buff and technophile," said Chamberlan, who courted arts patrons for over twenty years before Quebec's deep-pocketed patron extraordinaire and media czar, Daniel Langlois agreed to fund the centre's development. Though Chamberlan is mum on plans for the centre, he did say that theatre programming will follow the rep house tradition of offering independent, foreign, and art films that the commercial chains do not.

But despite Chamberlan's obvious pride with his looming rise from Programmer at the Parallele's tiny one-screen house to an operator at the new centre, he knows that he is one of the lucky ones. "Fourteen times I almost closed and went through unemployment. I never thought in my wildest dreams that I'd have such a chance."

Few rep house owners will ever see the kind of opportunity he's getting, and that's just fine, he said, because houses like the Parc still have a place. "We were the last of the Mohicans. [Martin] was doing a fine job. There's always a place for small cinemas" Chamberlan said, and his success shouldn't send out a grow-or-die message to the rep house industry.

But no matter what today's rep house might be unique in providing to its clientele, and despite whatever opportunities commercial expansions may actually create for repertory, the fact remains that alternative cinema is struggling and therein, repertory's mini-moguls realize, lie a few other problems that they cannot blame on Viacom or Loews.

Instead, rep houses are looking at threats from a few other directions these days in what appears to be their toughest battle yet, one that has pitted them against a whole new set of evils, not the least of which are the Internet, video technology, and marketing.

"We did really well in the 80's, but we're still holding our own," said Smy of the attack launched on rep houses by the proliferation of video technology and the video rental industry, offering consumers many of the same late-run movies that they would otherwise have filled the rep houses to see.

Although Smy also saw how the success of mainstream cinema spoke perhaps to a change towards the homogeneity among successful films in the industry and audiences' ignorance towards alternative cinema, he considers this to be as much a sign of all that marketing has done for mainstream films and all that it has done to take away from audience's access to independent film.

"I could go on criticizing the masses. But on the other hand, ignorance is a two-way street," he said.

Chamberlan concurred that marketing has taken on a huge role in the cinema industry and rep houses must take note. "The way you market them has to change. They need to market more personal film-making"

We'll miss you anyway, Stanley

I'm sure it's a sign of the times that Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*, slated for release this summer, will almost inevitably be the director's biggest commercial success, even if it's not of the calibre to survive the ages as some of his older films seem certain to do. The new film stars Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman - money in the bank for the silverscreen, and the "Stanley Kubrick's last film" billing promises to be a marketers' selling point that packs commercial houses. I'll be there, and apparently, so will Thierry Martin and the rest of the pea soup gang.

Hey, pea soup. Maybe the Cinema du Parc shutdown will pave the way for a brilliant new dawn in movie theatre concessions. And then again, maybe not. No one ever said it was easy to be a theatre industry visionary - least of all Thierry Martin. But rest assured, Martin will turn up again in another rep house and program his way back to a cultural niche in the community. For that matter, Crown Life will even provide a home for another rep house. What could possibly have made Stanley Kubrick happier? I can't begin to imagine.

du Maurier

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(continued from front page)

the referendum question violates the constitution. He believed that "the question is invalid because of its structural appearance" and claimed that students can be confused by the question because it is unclear of what is the question itself and what is the preamble to it.

Another argument is concerned with the substance of the question itself. Tanguay-Renaud stated that "the substantive contents of the question itself are ... broad, confusing, imprecise and poorly drafted."

Tanguay-Renaud also attacked several statements in the question, demonstrating their lack of clarity to an average student. He found that some elements of the questions might lead students to both agree and reject the question.

Yet another argument concerns a different article of the SSMU constitution; his suggestion here is that the question which was voted on by council is not the same as is being presented to the students in the Referendum.

Though the claims were brought to President Duncan Reid and to Cormack before the referendum at the immemorable Council meeting of February 4th, they both replied that they believe the question to be valid and constitutional.

The Petition proposes that both the referendum question be declared unconstitutional, and thus, invalid, and the results of the referendum be declared to have no force and no effect.

Tanguay-Renaud is confident of the rightness of his claim; the Law Students Association has officially sided with him.

"The LSA supports me... and I have a good chance of winning," he said.

He also promised that the case will be fought with a lawyer who was "champion in staged trials."

Proposed CKUT-FM Radio McGill Inc. By-Law Amendment

CKUT-Radio-McGill Inc. 90.3FM will convene a special general meeting of its members to debate, discuss and vote on a proposed amendment of Article 28 of the CKUT-Radio McGill Inc. By-Law. The amendment will facilitate future amendments to CKUT-Radio McGill Inc. By-Laws. The meeting will be held Thursday March 18 in Room 425/426 of the Shatner Building, 3480 McTavish, begining at 4 pm.

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End-of-year Reports of the PGSS Executive
Question Period

*The text of the current constitution and the proposed revisions are available at Thomson House

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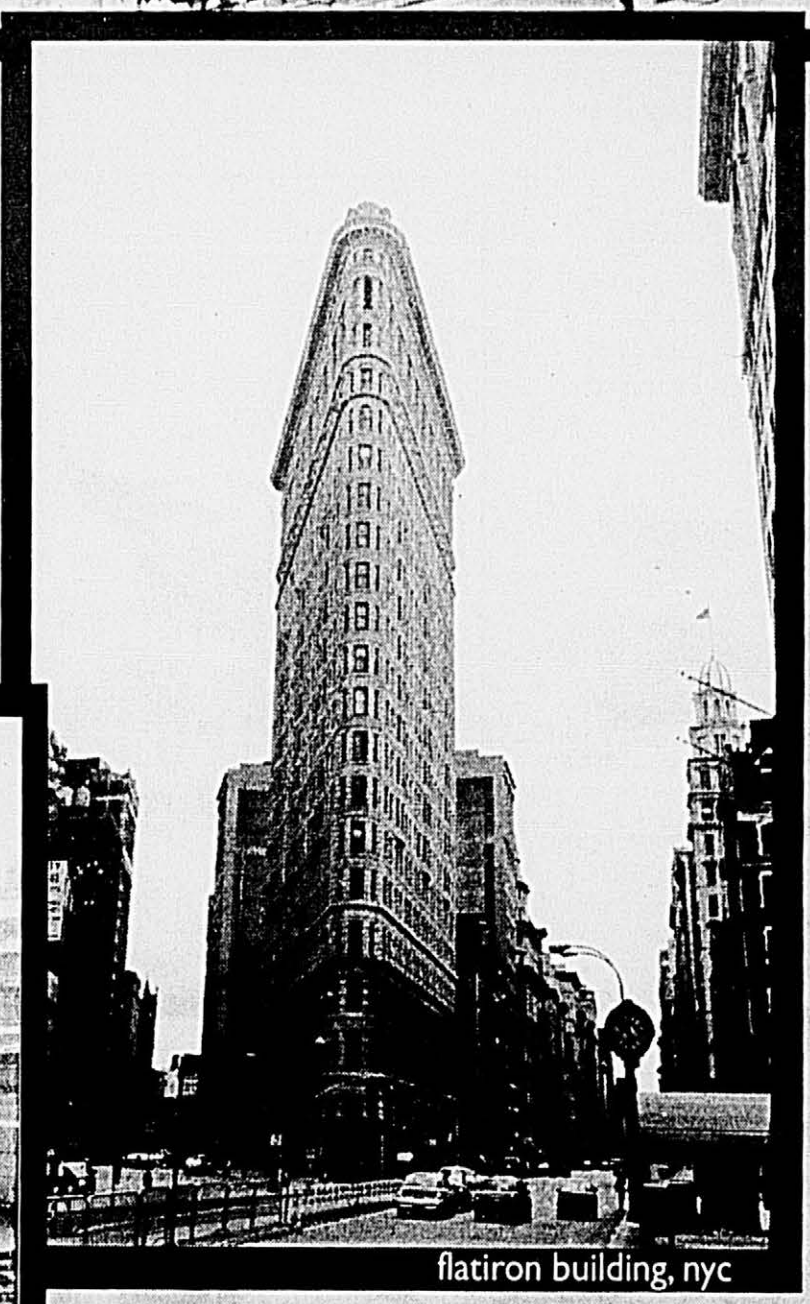
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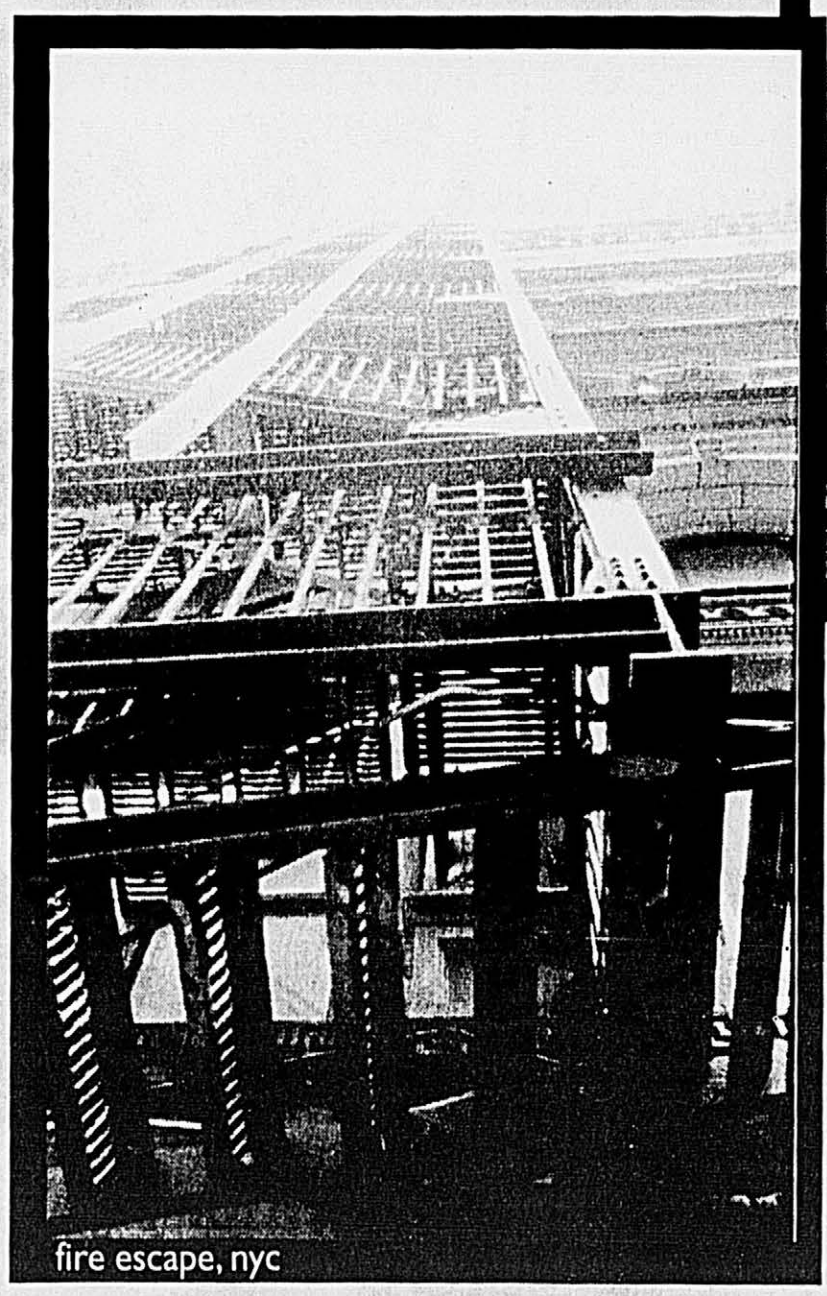
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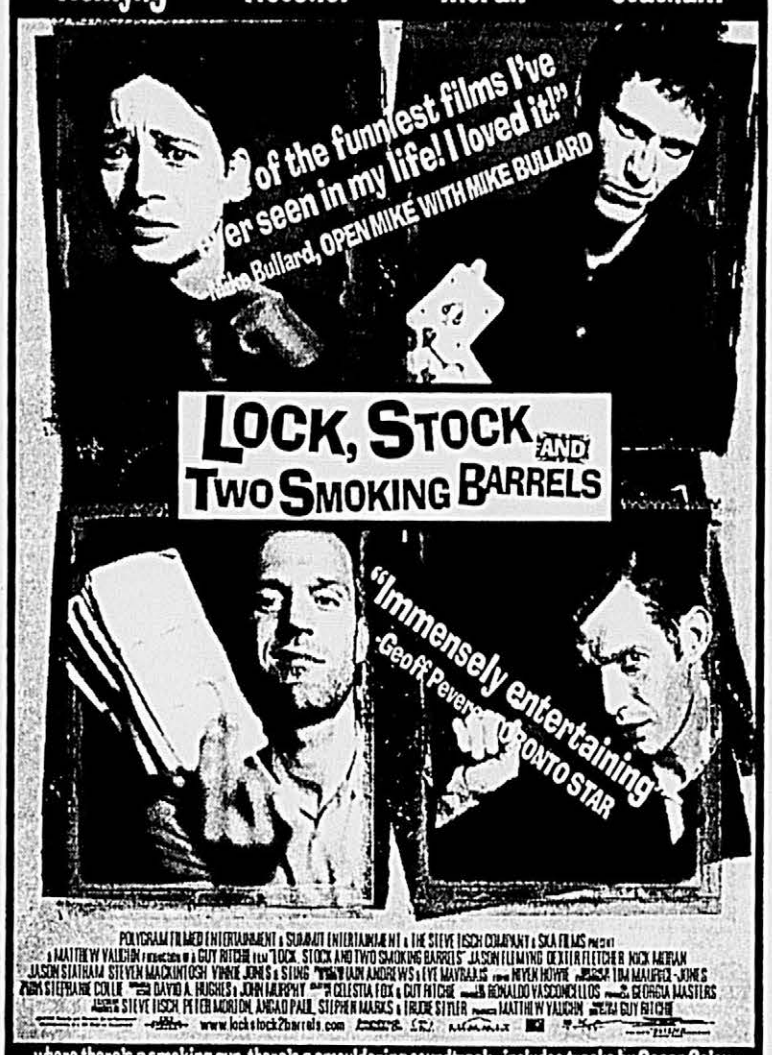

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